

## Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 TUNIS 05448 021044Z  
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W  
-----041888 021057Z /16

P 020938Z AUG 77

FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7717

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

C O N F I D E N T I A L TUNIS 5448

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OVIP (VANCE, CYRUS) TS

SUBJ: SECRETARY'S MIDDLE EAST TRIP: TUNISIAN VIEWS

1. TUNISIAN FOREIGN MINISTER CHATTY RECEIVED ME  
AUG 1 IN CONNECTION WITH CHIEFS OF MISSION MEETING  
WITH SECRETARY IN AMMAN AND OUTLINED CURRENT TUNISIAN  
THINKING ON MIDDLE EAST AND OTHER MATTERS OF MUTUAL INTEREST.

2. MIDDLE EAST: TUNISIA IS COMPLETELY SYMPATHETIC TO  
PRESIDENT CARTER'S MIDDLE EAST POLICY AND WOULD ONLY  
URGE THAT US NOT BE PRESSURED TO DEVIATE FROM IT.  
ANY CONCESSIONS THAT MAY BE NECESSARY TO ACHIEVE A  
MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT SHOULD BE WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK  
OF PRESENT US POLICY. IF WE STAND FIRM, BEGIN WILL  
NOT BE ABLE TO FOLLOW INTRANSIGENT LINE. ISRAELI  
PUBLIC OPINION WILL NOT ALLOW BEGIN TO ALIENATE US  
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BY ADOPTING EXTREME POSITIONS. IN REGARD TO GENEVA  
CONFERENCE, IT IS UNREASONABLE FOR ISRAEL TO SPEAK  
OF NO PRECONDITIONS SINCE EVEN A DEFINITION OF WHAT  
IS GOING TO BE DISCUSSED IS A PRECONDITION. WITHOUT  
SOME KIND OF AGREED FRAMEWORK, PROSPECTS FOR CONFERENCE  
WILL BE DIM. COLLAPSE OF GENEVA TALKS WOULD BE A  
CATASTROPHE. SADAT AND ASSAD ARE ALREADY RUNNING

GRAVE RISKS BOTH EXTERNALLY AND INTERNALLY. IF GENEVA IS A FAILURE, THEY WILL BE DISCREDITED AND ARAB OPINION WILL SWING TO REJECTION FRONT. OBVIOUSLY, QUESTION OF PALESTINIAN REPRESENTATION AT CONFERENCE IS CRITICAL. IF FULL REPRESENTATION NOT POSSIBLE THEN IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT SOME FORMULA BE FOUND FOR INCLUDING PALESTINIAN REPRESENTATIVES IN ARAB DELEGATION -- BUT NOT THAT OF JORDAN. FROM ITS CONTACTS, TUNISIA CONVINCED PALESTINIANS WILL NOT AGREE TO BEING INCLUDED IN JORDANIAN DELEGATION.

3. BILATERAL RELATIONS: FOREIGN MINISTER SAID THAT, ASI WAS AWARE, RELATIONS WERE EXCELLENT ACROSS THE BOARD. HE PARTICULARLY CITED COOPERATION IN ECONOMIC AND MILITARY SPHERES. HE SAID THAT HE WISHED SECRETARY TO BE AWARE OF GRATITUDE OF TUNISIAN GOVERNMENT FOR STAND WE TOOK IN RECENT CONTINENTAL SHELF DISPUTE WITH LIBYA. HE THOUGHT THAT US EFFORTS TO DISSUADE AMERICAN COMPANY READING AND BATES FROM DRILLING WERE A FACTOR IN DECISION BY QADHAFI TO REACH SOME SORT OF COMPROMISE.

4. AFRICA. TUNISIA IS EXTREMELY PLEASED THAT US IS GIVING SYMPATHETIC CONSIDERATION TO REQUESTS FOR ARMS FROM SOMALIA AND CHAD. IF WE HAD SHOWN SAME ATTITUDE EARLY ON, ANGOLA SITUATION MIGHT NEVER HAVE ARISEN.  
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NOW US IS BEGINNING TO GAIN GROUND IN AFRICA, AND WE MUST CONSOLIDATE THESE GAINS BY SUCCESSES IN THE MIDDLE EAST. TUNISIA'S ADVICE IN A NUTSHELL IS:  
THE USG MUST NOT LET ANYONE OR ANYTHING MAKE IT DEVIATE FROM THE PRESENT BROAD LINES OF ITS MIDDLE EAST POLICY.  
KING

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## Message Attributes

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**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
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